

ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 51

Why do taxpayer and government reform groups in California oppose Proposition 51?

Because it violates the principles of sound tax and spending policy, and key principles of good government.

In the midst of a multi-billion dollar state budget problem, Proposition 51 ties up the state budget forever with 17 new categories of required spending.

This initiative does not provide any new funds, but earmarks nearly \$1 billion of your tax dollars each year for a long list of programs and projects.

Without consideration of other budgetary priorities, Proposition 51 locks in spending even on nonessential projects which in tough times may have to take a back seat to other needs.

Accountability? The public and its elected representatives will have no voice if priorities need to be changed in future years. Health and social services, local government, higher education, or public safety might have to be cut or taxes raised to deal with budgetary pressures such as inflation, growth, or changes in federal funding. But Proposition 51 programs would be *exempt* from scrutiny.

The proponents claim that the measure won't take effect during bad budget times. But according to the California Budget Project, if Proposition 51 were the law now, it would be in effect for 2002–03, when the budget was nearly \$24 billion in debt. It would have made this year's budget crisis much worse. So much for budget protections.

There are 45 specific projects written into this initiative with little accountability, many of which benefit contributors to Proposition 51.

Example: A powerful Texas developer gets \$30 million in grade crossings constructed to serve their development. The

developer contributed \$120,000 to get Proposition 51 on the ballot. This project was not a priority for a local transportation program. (Source: *Riverside Press Enterprise*).

In all, these special projects add up to a whopping \$1.2 billion while a dozen others receive millions in funding every year, *forever*.

Still worse, the state is obligated to spend this money even if it means raising taxes or cutting vital services, such as children's health care and fire protection, during tough budget times.

For example, this initiative requires spending for projects, such as \$40 million for improvements to a music concourse area and funding for a vintage rail line, that would likely go unfunded by the Legislature during a budget crisis.

Those of us who oppose Proposition 51 have very diverse views about state spending and taxes. But all of us agree that Proposition 51 is bad tax and budget policy.

We all agree that as times change, or in a budget crisis, spending priorities have to be changed. But instead, Proposition 51 ties up your tax dollars so that the ability to make the right choices is impossible.

Don't allow \$1 billion of your tax dollars to be isolated from the democratic budget process every year.

We urge you to reject Proposition 51.

BARBARA INATSUGU, *President*

League of Women Voters of California

LENNY GOLDBERG, *Executive Director*

California Tax Reform Association

LEWIS K. UHLER, *President*

National Tax Limitation Committee

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 51

YES ON 51 lets you—the voter—take immediate action to address critical safety problems with California's roads, school buses, and walk paths to school.

The Legislature has refused to dedicate these funds to highway safety and congestion relief. The problems keep getting worse. We can't afford to wait.

PROPOSITION 51 DOES NOT RAISE TAXES. It dedicates EXISTING automobile sales taxes to *immediate* road and highway safety improvements, safety for children going to school, safe transportation for seniors and the disabled, and traffic congestion relief.

SAFER ROADS SAVE LIVES. "PROPOSITION 51 saves lives by fixing California's most dangerous roads and intersections. It will improve emergency response time when firefighters and paramedics rush to accidents."—*Sacramento Fire Chief Dennis Smith*

SAFETY FOR KIDS. "YES ON 51 protects children's health by replacing polluting and unsafe school buses and making safety improvements to bike paths and walkways."—*California Nurses Association*

SAFER ENVIRONMENT. YES ON 51 relieves congestion by repairing dangerous roads and improving public transportation, reducing auto emissions and cleaning the air.

PROTECT EDUCATION. YES ON 51 is supported by school districts and Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin because it PROTECTS the state education budget while improving the safety of school children.

TAXPAYER SAFEGUARDS. YES ON 51 requires Annual Audits and an independent oversight committee, ensuring your taxes go for traffic safety and congestion relief. Prop. 51 will be suspended during a major budget crisis.

We must address traffic safety and congestion now with existing funds, or it will cost more later.

DANA ROSE, *State Coordinator*

California Safe Kids Network

DR. JOHN BALMES, M.D.

American Lung Association of California

ARTURO VENEGAS, JR., *Chief of Police*
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